

Saturday, December 10, 2011, 7pm
Zellerbach Hall

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra

Nicholas McGegan, *conductor*

Dominique Labelle, *soprano*

Daniel Taylor, *countertenor*

Thomas Cooley, *tenor*

Nathaniel Watson, *baritone*

Philharmonia Chorale

Bruce Lamott, *director*

PROGRAM

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) Messiah, HWV 56 (1741)

Part I

INTERMISSION

Part II

PAUSE

Part III

This performance will be approximately three hours in length.

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Handel's *Messiah*

PRIMO LE PAROLE, *poi la musica*: first the words, then the music. Ask a roomful of people to identify the composer of *Messiah*, and a roomful of hands will go up. Ask that same gathering to name the librettist, and puzzled silence is likely to follow. To be sure, *Messiah* is not a setting of a freshly written, original book; the text is a compilation of passages from the Old and New Testaments. But that makes it no less impressive an achievement. The work of a perceptive and passionate writer, *Messiah's* libretto is just as noteworthy in its own way as George Frideric Handel's immortal music. So before that music, a look at those fine words—and their curator—is very much in order.

Charles Jennens's palatial home at Gopsall, North West Leicestershire—near Bosworth Field, where the War of the Roses was conclusively ended—was demolished in 1951 after years of neglect and abuse. Much the same can be said about Jennens himself: glamorous in his day, his star faded rapidly and commentarial wrecking balls gutted his posthumous reputation. “Suleyman the Magnificent,” japed 18th-century Shakespeare scholar George Steevens. “A vain fool crazed by his wealth,” sniped Samuel Johnson.

Prickly, prissy, snippy, snooty and waspish, Jennens was manifestly not a man of the people. But charges that he was an intellectual featherweight are unfounded. The sharpest barbs are products of Steevens's malicious envy of Jennens's classy Shakespeare editions and, as such, deserve permanent retirement. Christopher Hogwood duly notes Jennens's “self-importance and intolerance, the high-handed manner of a wealthy country gentleman, opinionated and cruel in his criticism, whose ostentation made many of his contemporaries enemies.” But, he also points out Jennens's many accomplishments, his educated taste, his passionate dedication to Handel's music, his well-designed libretti and his often splendid editorial advice—such as restoring an excised “Allelujah” to the Part I finale of *Saul*.

Messiah is a child of the Enlightenment, that revolutionary mindset that promoted reason over unexamined belief, but Charles Jennens was no Edward Gibbon, Thomas Paine or Thomas Jefferson proclaiming a humanistic philosophy based on rational inquiry. Instead, he sought to defend his deeply felt and conservative Anglican Christianity against what he saw as intellectual attacks on the core of the Christian message. In July 1741, Jennens wrote to his friend Edward Holdsworth:

Handel says he will do nothing next Winter, but I hope I shall persuade him to set another Scripture Collection I have made for him, & perform it for his own Benefit in Passion Week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius & Skill upon it, that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subject excells every other Subject. The Subject is *Messiah*.

Jennens did indeed manage to “persuade” his eminent friend and colleague, but victory was tempered with disappointment, as we hear in another letter to Holdsworth, from December 1741:

I heard with great pleasure at my arrival in Town, that Handel had set the Oratorio of *Messiah*; but it was some mortification to me to hear that instead of performing it here he was gone to Ireland with it. However, I hope we shall hear it when he comes back.

These letters reveal that *Messiah* represents a departure from Handel's customary active and collaborative relationship with his librettists, including Jennens in previous projects such as *Saul*, *L'Allegro* and (probably) *Israel in Egypt*. Handel apparently set the completed *Messiah* libretto as handed to him, without the usual rounds of editorial negotiations. That speaks well of Jennens's literary skill, for his elegantly structured libretto deserves a full share of the credit for *Messiah's* perennial popularity. Jennens based his scriptural selections on both theological and musical considerations—*Messiah* is first and foremost an oratorio libretto, not a religious tract. Consider

the very first section, drawn from the first five verses of Isaiah 40, which Jennens structured as recitative-aria-chorus, a formula that will repeat itself—sometimes with significant expansion—throughout the entire oratorio.

Now it was Handel's turn to clothe Jennens's masterful compilation with compelling and entertaining music. He was more than up to the task. By 1741, George Frideric Handel was an English institution, resident for 30 years, citizen for the past 14 years, a robust (if not always altogether healthy) man in his mid-50s. As a self-employed freelance musician, responsible to the dictates of the public rather than the directives of courtly or clerical patrons, he had seen his full share of triumph and failure, boom and bust, hits and flops. As recently as 1737, he had suffered a sickening financial loss from the collapse of an opera season in which he was a partner, followed by a ‘palsy’ (probably a stroke) that left him temporarily without the use of his right hand. Showing his customary powers of recuperation, he not only regained his health but also his financial footing. Nothing seemed to keep him down for long; Handel was tough, resilient, and supremely confident in his ability to produce music that met public approval.

He had good reason for that confidence. As far back as 1710, his first London visit had resulted in the blockbuster hit *Rinaldo* and, for decades, he had produced a steady stream of Italian operas in addition to a sizeable catalog of instrumental music. His nontheatrical enterprises kept him afloat during the 1730s as the Italian opera craze subsided, leaving Handel searching for another high-profit genre that could restore his endangered fortunes. He didn't have to look very far: the oratorio stood ready to provide him with the next stage in his career. He was no newcomer to the genre: as far back as 1707, he had written *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* for his Roman patron Cardinal Pamphili, and the flamboyant *La Resurrezione* the following year. Early in his English residency, he wrote *Acis and Galatea* and *Esther* for the Duke of Chandos. As the 1730s progressed, oratorios made up a steadily expanding share of his output: *Deborah*

and *Athalia* in 1733, *Alexander's Feast* and *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* in 1736, *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt* in 1739, and most recently 1740's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, to texts adapted from John Milton by Charles Jennens.

So it was a seasoned veteran who determined that Jennens's new libretto would be ideal for a forthcoming Dublin concert series scheduled to begin in late 1741. Handel started composing *Messiah* on August 22 and completed the manuscript on September 14—that's 24 days, or three and a half weeks. Such speed has typically left commentators nonplussed if not downright confounded: how could anybody write a work of *Messiah's* length in such an incredibly short time? That *Messiah* contains quite modest amounts of recycled or borrowed material only exacerbates commentarial befuddlement. Here and there awkward scansion betrays a repurposed melody, such as “For unto us a Child is born”—originally “*Nò, di voi non vo fidarmi*,” a duet from a recent cantata. But on the whole, *Messiah* is original work. So how did Handel write it so quickly?

The answer is far simpler than one might expect and has nothing to do with romantic notions of divine inspiration, sleep deprivation, starvation or tearstained manuscripts. Handel always composed quickly—speed is a basic survival skill for any hardworking theatrical composer in any era—and Handel was nothing if not a survivor. He was a past master at turning out yards upon yards of finished manuscript on schedule and to specification and, even considering the unusual challenges posed by *Messiah*, a libretto fundamentally unlike any he had ever set before, three and a half weeks from start to finish is impressive but altogether believable.

Speedy, yes; formulaic, no. *Messiah* is no dutiful progression of recitatives followed by arias but rather a skillful blend of vocal forms and genres, sometimes blurring the customary boundaries between recitative, aria and chorus. Throughout *Messiah*, Handel changes key, tempo, meter and mode as best serves the text—such as the dramatic shifts throughout “But who may abide the day of his coming” in

Part I. Saving the best for last, Handel treats the concluding numbers—44 through 47—as one sustained movement, almost in the manner of a recitative-free operatic finale.

For his Dublin series, booked in the city's shiny new Music Hall on Fishamble Street, Handel planned an ambitious program of recent hits as well as old favorites. He presented *L'Allegro* on December 23, *Acis and Galatea* and the *Ode* on January 20. *Esther* and *Alexander's Feast* followed on January 30 and February 13, respectively. For the March concert version of *Imeneo* the company was joined by singer/actress Susannah Cibber, shortly to achieve immortality as the first soprano ever to perform *Messiah*: that came about on Tuesday, April 13, 1742.

Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crouded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestic and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear.

Thus the *Dublin Journal*, snagging the honors of posting the very first of uncountable *Messiah* reviews, on April 17, 1742. Another less formal appraisal came from the Reverend Dr. Delaney, so taken with Mrs. Cibber's performance of "He was despisèd" that he exclaimed, "Woman, for this, be all thy sins forgiven!" Dublin heard *Messiah* twice more, in May and June; Handel departed for London on August 17, determined to recapture the affection of a London public that had cooled towards him in recent years.

Handel returned to a London that was riding a wave of religious piety, thanks to the energies of John and Charles Wesley, Anglican revivalists whose influence ran towards the puritanical, in particular regarding that perennial scapegoat of evangelical reformers, the popular theater. Handel, ever sensitive to the overall public temperature, decided to hold off from introducing *Messiah* and chose instead to re-establish his London presence with the new *Samson*, given six performances starting on February 18, 1743. Despite a few brickbats tossed by an unamused

Horace Walpole on Handel's preference for English soloists over Italian opera singers ("he has hired all the goddesses from farces and the singers of Roast Beef from between the acts at both theaters"), the *Samson* performances were warmly received. Thus emboldened, Handel scheduled another series of six oratorio concerts featuring the same company; they would begin on March 16 with a repeat of *Samson* followed by a revival of *L'Allegro* on the 18th, with *Messiah* set for its London premiere on Wednesday, March 23. In a fit of uncertainty about potential backlash from Anglican right-wingers, Handel chose to advertise it only as "A New Sacred Oratorio," rather than referring to it by name.

But the oratorio's identity and subject matter were known about town nonetheless, and the same day (March 19) as Handel's advertisement appeared, the *Universal Spectator* published a letter signed with the pseudonym "Philaletes"—i.e., lover of truth.

But it seems the Old Testament is not to be prophan'd alone, nor God by the Name of Jehovah only, but the New must be join'd with it, and God by the most sacred the most merciful name of Messiah; for I'm inform'd than an Oratorio call'd by that Name has already been perform'd in Ireland, and is soon to be perform'd here: What the Piece itself is, I know not, and therefore shall say nothing about it; but I must again ask, If the Place and Performers are fit?

The tone is respectful but the message is clear enough: the objection was not so much to the oratorio, but rather to the blending of theater with religion, an issue that was to dog London's reception of *Messiah* for years to come. Whether the London premiere was even successful or not remains a bit uncertain, although the Earl of Shaftesbury states firmly that *Messiah* "was but indifferently relish'd."

Subsequent outings were few and far between during the 1740s. Then fortune suddenly smiled on Handel's undervalued oratorio. Handel arranged a performance of the complete *Messiah* for May 1, 1750, at London's Foundling Hospital, as a dedication for the new organ he had donated. The association

with charity proved to be the oratorio's turning point, as sellout crowds cheered. Handel would produce *Messiah* at both Covent Garden and the Foundling Hospital on a yearly basis for the rest of his life; he died on April 14, 1759, in the interval between the April and May concerts. By then, *Messiah* had become a cherished fixture of the Easter season; only during the 19th century did it become traditional Christmas fare.

There can be no single, absolutely authoritative version of *Messiah*. Handel was quick to revise, rewrite and rework as necessary to meet the needs of a particular performer or venue and, from 1742 through the early 1750s, the oratorio underwent numerous and often significant changes. Although the *Messiah* revisions are convoluted and confusing, a standardized *Messiah* has evolved that generally conforms to the score as Handel performed it in the 1750s. But the variants offer abundant opportunity for exploration, such as a recent recording that proudly declares itself as reproducing the 1742 Dublin original.

So, finally, the question: Why *Messiah*? Why wasn't Bach's Christmas Oratorio adopted for sing-it-yourself festivals, or the *St. Matthew Passion* at Eastertime? Those pieces are revered and respected—but it is *Messiah* that has joined hands with Santa Claus, *Messiah* that everybody can whistle, *Messiah* that inspired the *Hallelujah Hustle*. That's actually quite understandable, for alone of the great sacred choral works of modern music—Bach's masses and passions, Mozart's and Haydn's masses, Beethoven's *Missa solennis* and the Verdi *Requiem*—*Messiah* stands apart as having at least one foot in homey, popular theater. *Messiah* does not call upon us to repent, to anguish or to ponder: its *raison d'être* is to offer reassurance. It was created to provide pleasure and entertainment, and if it managed to tuck a bit of spiritual renewal into the mix, so much the better. The theatricality that caused so much consternation in the 1740s has proven to be *Messiah's* greatest strength in the long run. There's something fundamentally friendly about it, something instinctively loveable and approachable. So it thrives—in

churches, community centers, concert halls and high school gymnasiums; on records, on the radio, in movies, on TV, even on YouTube. Eighteenth-century historian Charles Burney recounts an incident at the Dublin premiere in which orchestra leader Matthew Dubourg became hopelessly lost during a solo in one of the arias. Somehow he stumbled back to the proper key, at which point Handel bellowed out lustily: "You are welcome home, Mr. Dubourg!"

You are welcome home. That's the key to *Messiah*—beloved, reassuring and familiar, it offers living proof that great art is for all people, in all times and in all places. The Roubiliac statue on Handel's tomb in Westminster Abbey shows him holding the score to *Messiah*. He needs no other epitaph.

Scott Fogelson

PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Nicholas McGegan, *Music Director**The Players and Their Instruments*

Philharmonia Baroque's musicians perform on historically accurate instruments. Below each player's name is information about his or her instrument's maker and origin.

VIOLIN

Carla Moore, *Concertmaster*
Johann Georg Thir, Vienna, 1754

Maria Caswell
Antoni Rief, Vils, Tyrol, 1725

Jolianne von Einem†
Rowland Ross, Guildford, England, 1979;
after Antonio Stradivari, Cremona

Katherine Kyme
Carlo Antonio Testore, Milan, 1720

Anthony Martin
Thomas Oliver Croen, Walnut Creek, 2005;
after F. Gobetti, Venice, 1717

Maxine Nemerovski
Timothy Johnson, Bloomington, Indiana, 1999;
after A. Stradivari

Laurie Young Stevens
Anonymous, Paris, c. 1720

Noah Strick
Celia Bridges, Cologne, 1988

Sara Usher
Desiderio Quercetani, Parma, 2001;
after A. Stradivari

Lisa Weiss
Anonymous, London; after Testore

Alicia Yang
Richard Duke, London, 1762

VIOLA

Lisa Grodin*
Mathias Eberl, Salzburg, 1680

David Daniel Bowes
Richard Duke, London, c. 1780

Ellie Nishi
Anonymous, Germany, 18th century

VIOLONCELLO

Tanya Tomkins*
Lockley Hill, London, 1798

Phoebe Carrai
Anonymous, Italy, c. 1690

Paul Hale
Joseph Grubaugh & Sigrun Seifert, Petaluma, 1988;
after A. Stradivari

William Skeen
Anonymous, Italy, c. 1685

BASS

Kristin Zoernig*
Joseph Wrent, Rotterdam, Netherlands, 1648

OBOE

Marc Schachman*
H. A. Vas Dias, Decatur, Georgia, 2001;
after T. Stanesby, England, c. 1710

Michael DuPree
H. A. Vas Dias, 1998; after T. Stanesby, c. 1700

BASSOON

Danny Bond*
Peter de Koningh, Hall, Netherlands, 1978;
after Prudent, Paris, c. 1765

Marilyn Boenau
Paul Halperin, Zell i.W., Germany, 2002;
after Deper, Vienna

TRUMPET

Caleb Hudson*
Rainer Egger, Basel, 2009; after J. L. Ehe III,
Nuremberg, 1746

Fred Holmgren
Fred Holmgren, Massachusetts, 2004;
after J. L. Ehe III, 1746

TIMPANI

Kent Reed*
Anonymous, England, c. 1840

ORGAN

Hanneke van Proosdij*
Winold van der Putten, Finsterwolde, Netherlands,
2004; after 18th century chest organ

HARPSICHORD

Charles Sherman*
John Phillips, Berkeley, 1993; Italian harpsichord after
18th-century Florentine prototypes; generously lent by
John Phillips.

* *Principal*† *Principal Second Violin*

PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE TOUR STAFF

Peter Pastreich, *Executive Director*

Michael Costa, *General Manager*

Jeffrey Phillips, *Artistic Administrator*

Alexander Kort, *Stage Manager*

David Daniel Bowes, *Music Librarian*

E. J. Chavez, *Stage Equipment Coordinator*

Thomas Winter, *Keyboard Technician*

PHILHARMONIA CHORALE

Bruce Lamott, *Director*

SOPRANO

Angela Arnold
 Jennifer Ashworth
 Anne-Claire Baconnais
 Claire Kelm
 Barbara Rowland
 Amy White

ALTO

Terry Alvord
 Elspeth Franks
 Lynda Higson
 Linda Liebschutz
 Heidi Waterman
 Celeste Winant

TENOR

Trey Costerisan
 Kevin Gibbs
 Corey Head
 Jimmy Kansau
 Mark Mueller
 Jonathan Smucker

BASS

John Bischoff
 Tom Hart
 Josh Henderson
 John-Elliott Kirk
 Jim Monios
 Chad Runyon



Randi Beach

SAN FRANCISCO's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra has been dedicated to historically informed performance of Baroque, Classical and early-Romantic music on original instruments since its inception in 1981. Under Music Director Nicholas McGegan, Philharmonia Baroque was named *Musical America's* 2004 Ensemble of the Year, and, according to *Los Angeles Times* critic Alan Rich, has become "an ensemble for early music as fine as any in the world today." The Orchestra performs an annual subscription season in the San Francisco Bay Area, and is regularly heard on tour in the United States and internationally. In August 2011, the Orchestra toured the Ravinia, Mostly Mozart, and Tanglewood Festivals to sold-out halls and critical acclaim.

The Orchestra has its own professional chorus, the Philharmonia Chorale, and welcomes such talented guest artists as mezzo-soprano Susan Graham, countertenor David Daniels, conductor Jordi Savall, violinist Monica Huggett, recorder player Marion Verbruggen and soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian.

The Orchestra has had numerous successful collaborations with celebrated musicians, composers, and choreographers. Philharmonia Baroque premiered its first commissioned work, a one-act opera by Jake Heggie entitled *To Hell and Back*, in November 2006. In collaboration with the Mark Morris Dance Group, Philharmonia Baroque gave the U.S. premieres of Morris's highly acclaimed productions of Henry Purcell's *King Arthur* and Jean-Philippe Rameau's ballet-opera *Platée*. Philharmonia Baroque has also collaborated with many Bay Area performing arts groups, such as Alonzo

King's LINES Ballet, American Conservatory Theater and San Francisco Girls Chorus.

Among the most-recorded period-instrument orchestras in the United States or in Europe, Philharmonia has made 32 highly praised recordings, including its *Gramophone* Award-winning recording of Handel's *Susanna*, for Harmonia Mundi, Reference Recordings, and BMG. In 2011, the orchestra launched its own label, Philharmonia Baroque Productions, with an acclaimed recording of Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été* and Handel arias featuring mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson. Subsequent releases include a collection of three Haydn symphonies, and a recording of Vivaldi violin concerti (including *The Four Seasons*) featuring soloist Elizabeth Blumenstock.

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra was founded by harpsichordist and early music pioneer Laurette Goldberg.



Randi Beach 2008

Nicholas McGegan (*Music Director*) is loved by audiences and orchestras for performances that match authority with enthusiasm, scholarship with joy, and curatorial responsibility with evangelical exuberance.

Through his 25 years as its music director, McGegan has established the San Francisco-based Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Philharmonia Chorale as the leading period performance ensemble in America—and at the forefront of the "historical" movement worldwide thanks to notable appearances at Carnegie Hall, the London Proms, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and the International Handel Festival, Göttingen, where he was artistic director from 1991 to 2011.

In Göttingen and with Philharmonia Baroque he has defined an approach to period style that sets the current standard: probing, serious but undogmatic, recognising that the music of the past doesn't belong in a museum or in academia but in vigorous engagement with an audience, for pleasure and delight on both sides of the platform edge.

Active in opera as well as the concert hall, he was principal conductor of Sweden's perfectly preserved 18th-century theater Drottningholm 1993–1996, running the annual festival there. And he has been a pioneer in the process of exporting historically informed practice beyond the small world of period instruments to the wider one of conventional symphonic forces, guest-conducting orchestras like the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Toronto Symphony and Sydney Symphony, the New York, Los Angeles and Hong Kong philharmonics, the Northern Sinfonia and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, as well as opera companies including Covent Garden, San Francisco, Santa Fe and Washington.

His discography of over 100 releases includes the world premiere recording of Handel's *Susanna*, which attracted both a *Gramophone* Award and Grammy Award nomination, and recent issues of the same composer's *Solomon*, *Samson*, and *Acis and Galatea* (a rarity in that it unearths the little-known version adapted by Felix Mendelssohn). He is also credited with the first performance in modern times of Handel's masterly but mislaid *Gloria*. Under their new label, Philharmonia Baroque Productions (PBP), Philharmonia has recently released two archival recordings: Berlioz's *Les nuits d'été* and selected Handel arias with the late Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, and Haydn Symphonies Nos. 88, 101 and 104. Upcoming releases include Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and other concerti with Elizabeth Blumenstock as violin soloist.

Mr. McGegan has enjoyed dance collaborations with Mark Morris, notably the premiere performances of Mr. Morris's production of Rameau's *Platée* at the Edinburgh Festival and

L'Allegro at Ravinia and the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York.

Mr. McGegan is committed to the next generation of musicians, frequently conducting and coaching students in residencies and engagements at Yale University, the Juilliard School, Aspen Music Festival and School, and the Music Academy of the West.

Born in England, Nicholas McGegan was educated at Cambridge and Oxford and taught at the Royal College of Music, London. He was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the Queen's Birthday Honours for 2010 "for services to music overseas." His awards also include the Halle Handel Prize, an honorary professorship at Georg-August University, Göttingen; the Order of Merit of the State of Lower Saxony (Germany); the Medal of Honour of the City of Göttingen, and an official Nicholas McGegan Day, declared by the Mayor of San Francisco in recognition of two decades' distinguished work with the Philharmonia Baroque.



Soprano **Dominique Labelle** takes great pride in her work with colleagues and in her probing explorations of the repertoire from the Baroque to new music. Throughout her career, her musicianship and passionate commitment to music-making have led to close and enduring collaborations with a number of the world's most respected conductors and composers, most recently Nicholas McGegan, Iván Fischer, Jos van Veldhoven and the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Yehudi Wyner. She also treasures her long association with the late Robert Shaw.

Recent and upcoming engagements include Handel's *Messiah* with Kent Nagano and the Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, and with Gerard Schwartz and the Seattle Symphony Orchestra; Yehudi Wyner's *Fragments from Antiquity* with the Lexington Symphony; Barber's *Knoxville, Summer of 1915* with the

Boston Classical Orchestra; and ten performances in spring 2011 at the Göttingen Festival in Germany with Nicholas McGegan, including a Handel Gala that will celebrate his 20-year tenure as the festival's artistic director. She and Mr. McGegan, with whom she has recorded and performed extensively, are also collaborating in performances of Handel's *Orlando* and *Alexander's Feast*, with San Francisco's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

Her recent appearances with Hungarian conductor Iván Fischer include the Countess Almaviva in Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* at Teatro Perez Galdos in Las Palmas and in Budapest, a Bach B-minor Mass in Washington DC, and a Bach *St. Matthew Passion* with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam.

In addition to her renowned Handel, Mozart and Bach interpretations, she is drawn to contemporary music. She sings *Seven Romances on Poetry of Alexander Blok* by one of her favorite modern composers, Shostakovich, at the Mt. Desert Festival of Chamber Music in Maine in the summer of 2011. Her recent performance of Britten's *Les Illuminations* with the New England String Ensemble and Susan Daveny Wyner was called "heated" and "voluptuous" by the *Boston Globe*. She has performed and recorded John Harbison's *The Rewaking* with the Lydian String Quartet.

Ms. Labelle first came to international prominence as Donna Anna in Peter Sellars's daring production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, set in Spanish Harlem, which she performed in New York, Paris and Vienna. She has also won great acclaim for her portrayal of Micaela in Bizet's *Carmen*.

Among her numerous recordings of opera and concert repertoire is Monsigny's *Le Déserteur*, with Opera Lafayette and Ryan Brown (Naxos), with whom she also performed in Gluck's *Armide* at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall and at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. She can also be heard on recordings on the Virgin Veritas, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, RCA Victor Red Seal, Koss, Denon, New World, Carus and Musica Omnia

labels. Her recording of Handel's *Arminio* (Virgin Classics) won the 2002 Handel Prize.

Born in Montreal and trained at McGill and Boston universities, Ms. Labelle enjoys sharing her technical and musical insights with young singers, and has taught master classes at Harvard University, McGill, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts with more being planned. She lives in central Massachusetts with her husband and two children.



Marie-Reine Mattara

An exclusive recording artist for Sony Classical Masterworks, **Daniel Taylor** is one of the most sought-after countertenors in the world. He has made more than 80 recordings, including Bach Cantatas with the English Baroque Soloists/Gardiner (DG Archiv), Handel's *Rinaldo* (*Gramophone* Award) with Cecilia Bartoli/AAM/Hogwood, Sakamoto's pop-opera *Life* with the Dalai Lama narrating (Sony), Bach Cantatas with the Bach Collegium Japan/Suzuki (BIS).

Mr. Taylor's debut at Glyndebourne in Handel's *Theodora* (recorded for Erato) was greeted with critical praise and followed on his operatic debut in Jonathan Miller's production of *Rodelinda* (for EMI). His North American opera debut came in Handel's *Cesare* at the New York Metropolitan Opera.

Highlights of past engagements include Handel's *Messiah* with San Francisco Symphony and St. Louis Symphony (both with Harry Christophers); the New York Philharmonic/Helmuth Rilling; Handel's *Israel in Egypt* with the Cleveland Orchestra/McGegan; Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Toronto Symphony/Oundjan; Bach *Christmas Oratorio* with the National Arts Centre/Pinnock; Bernstein's Chichester Psalms with the Philadelphia Orchestra/Dutoit; Handel's *Saul* with Bachakademie Stuttgart/Rilling (for Hänssler Classics); and Schnittke's *Faust Cantata* with the Rotterdam Philharmonic/Gergiev. He has

performed and recorded extensively with both the Gabrieli Consort under Paul McCreesh and the Monteverdi Choir with John Eliot Gardiner.

Mr. Taylor recently made his debuts with the Israel Philharmonic and the Madrid National Orchestra, and returned to the St. Louis Symphony, to Boston's Handel & Haydn Society, to the Nashville, San Diego and San Francisco symphonies, and to the Calgary Philharmonic, the Toronto Symphony and the Quebec Symphony. He toured Europe with the Academy of Ancient Music, and appeared in recital at London's Wigmore Hall, in Barcelona at the Palau de la Musica and at New York's Carnegie Hall.

Mr. Taylor is Professor of Voice at the Conservatoire de Musique in Montreal, Professor of Voice at the University of Ottawa, an Adjunct Professor at McGill University, and a Visiting Scholar at the University of Victoria and Artist-in-Residence at Banff Centre for the Performing Arts. He is Artistic Director and Conductor of the Choir and Orchestra of the Theatre of Early Music.



American tenor **Thomas Cooley** is establishing a worldwide reputation as a singer of versatility, expressiveness and virtuosity. Equally at home on the concert stage and in the opera house, his repertoire ranges across more than four centuries.

Season highlights in 2010–2011 include Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* with the National Arts Centre Orchestra (Rizzi), Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* with the Atlanta Symphony (Runnicles) and Cathedral Choral Society, Berlioz *Requiem* at Carnegie Hall (Spano), Haydn *Creation* with the Indianapolis Symphony (Boyd) and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra (McGegan), Bach *St. Matthew Passion* in Koln and Saarbrücken, Mozart *Requiem* (Christophers) and Honneger *Le Roi David* (Shoenandt) in Amsterdam, Beethoven Symphony No. 9 with the Alabama Symphony (Brown), the title role in Handel's *Jephtha* and the Saint-Saëns

Requiem in New York under the baton of Kent Tritle, Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, and *Messiah* with the Minnesota Orchestra (Vanska) and Baltimore Symphony (Polochik).

Recent recital highlights included performances of works by Monteverdi and Schütz (Berkeley); Britten (Britten Festival, Aldeburgh); Haydn and Beethoven (Göttingen); and Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* with pianist Donald Sulzen.

Mr. Cooley lived in Munich for ten years, four as a member of the Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz, singing featured roles in operas by Mozart and Rossini.

Mr. Cooley's recent recordings include Handel's *Samson* (Göttingen Handel Festival Orchestra/McGegan, Carus); Vivaldi's *Dixit Dominus* (Deutsche Grammophon); Mozart's Requiem (Windsbacher Knabenchor, Sony) and Mozart's Mass in C minor (Handel & Haydn Society/Christophers, Coro Allegro).



Michael Schilbhand

Baritone **Nathaniel Watson** is a versatile artist who has performed successfully in a wide variety of musical styles since 1982. Highlights include *Der Freischütz* with the New York Philharmonic and Sir Colin Davis, Beethoven's

Symphony No. 9 under Kurt Masur and in Carnegie Hall with Sir Roger Norrington in the conductor's debut concert in America. He appeared in the title role in the Boston Early Music Festival production of Cavalli's *Ercolo amante* in Boston, at Tanglewood, and at the Utrecht Festival in Holland, and was featured in the Salzburg Festival production of Weill's *Mahagonny*. Recent seasons have included performances of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with Nicholas McGegan and Philharmonia Baroque; *Messiah* with the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center; Mendelssohn's *Paulus* and Mahler's Eighth Symphony with L'Orchestre symphonique de Québec under Yoav Talmi; Purcell's *King Arthur* with Tafelmusik; Mozart's *Magic Flute* in Calgary; and Handel's *Semele* with Pacific Opera Victoria. Originally from

Boston, Mr. Watson attended the Eastman School of Music and Yale University. He has studied for many years with Herbert Burris.



The **Philharmonia Chorale** was formed in 1995 to provide a vocal complement whose fluency in the stylistic language of the baroque period matched that of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. The 24 members of the Chorale are professional singers with distinguished solo and ensemble experience. Chorale members appear regularly with organizations such as the San Francisco Symphony, Carmel Bach Festival and American Bach Soloists, are guest soloists with most of the area's symphonic and choral organizations, appear in roles with regional opera companies, and have been members and founders of some of the country's premier vocal ensembles, including Chanticleer, the Dale Warland Singers and Theatre of Voices.

Founded by John Butt, a baroque keyboardist and one of the world's leading Bach scholars, the Chorale has been led by conductor and musicologist Bruce Lamott since 1997. In its first decade, the Chorale's repertoire included nine Handel oratorios, Bach's *St. John Passion* and Christmas Oratorio, Mozart's C minor Mass and—in collaboration with other choral ensembles—Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The Chorale made its New York debut at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1998 and appeared with Philharmonia Baroque at the new Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in Orange County. The Chorale appears on the Orchestra's recordings of Arne's *Alfred*, Scarlatti's *Cecilian Vespers* and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.



Bruce Lamott has been director of the Philharmonia Chorale for more than a decade. He first performed with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in 1989, as continuo harpsichordist for Handel's *Giustino*.

Mr. Lamott was previously the Director of Choruses and Conductor of the Mission Candlelight Concerts at the Carmel Bach Festival, where his 30-year tenure also included performing as a harpsichordist and presenting as a lecturer and education director. In eight seasons as Choral Director and Assistant Conductor of the Sacramento Symphony, he conducted annual choral concerts of major works, including both Bach *Passion* settings and Haydn's *The Seasons*, as well as preparing the chorus for most of the standard symphonic choral repertoire.

Mr. Lamott received a bachelor's degree from Lewis and Clark College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in musicology from Stanford University, where he researched the keyboard improvisation practices of the baroque period. Mr. Lamott then joined the musicology faculty at UC Davis, where he directed the Early Music Ensemble. He currently resides in San Francisco, where he teaches choral music and music history at San Francisco University High School, and is part-time professor of music history at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Among his other music-related activities, Mr. Lamott also teaches continuo realization in the Merola Program of San Francisco Opera and lectures for the San Francisco Opera Guild.